



# Portland Housing Bureau

Mayor Ted Wheeler • Director Shannon Callahan

## FAQ for COVID Household Assistance Program (CVHAP) Request for Interest

Q: How can I apply for a gift card as an individual?

A: The programs have not opened for individuals yet. There will be a website form for individuals to apply as well as opportunities to apply through local organizations. We anticipate that this will be available in early September.

Q: Can faith based organizations apply to implement these programs? Can you provide a direct link to the agency application for the RFI?

A: Yes, faith based organizations may apply. Please submit the form found at the following link.

- [Link to CVHAP \(household assistance fund\)](#)

Q: Does a community group have to be a 501(c)(3) to be a vendor? Can a small community group, which is not a 501(c)(3), partner with a nonprofit as a fiscal agent?

A: No, applicants are not required to be a 501(c)(3) for the CVHAP (household assistance program). However, all applicants should have the fiscal ability to invoice for payment, submit required reports, and track expenditures. If a small, nonregistered volunteer group wants to apply, it should partner with a nonprofit as a fiscal agent if it does not have this capability. If you choose to do this, please put the information on the partnership in the application and be sure the nonprofit and the community group have agreed on the division of roles before submission.

Q: How can you target certain races or demographic groups, isn't that violating the Fair Housing Act?

A: The programs will include multiple intake methods, some of which go through partnerships with community based organizations to make sure that some disadvantaged populations will get access. This is not a violation of the Fair Housing Act.

Q: Can nonprofit members of the Short Term Rental Assistance (STRA) network apply for these resources?

A: Yes, members of the STRA network are eligible to apply for the CVHAP (household assistance program). (They are not eligible for the CVRRP program (rental assistance) because there is a separate funding stream going through the County specifically directed to the STRA network.)

Q: Should recipients of the cards keep receipts? Do people need a bank account to access the cards?

A: There is no follow-up required from recipients once the cards have been activated/funded. The cards are programmed to be used for all eligible expenses. No bank account is required for their use. These are prepaid debit cards and can be used for payment anywhere such cards are accepted, as long as the costs are eligible.

Q: Can cards be used to make mortgage payments?

A: Yes. Any housing-related costs are eligible expenses.

Q: Are employees of the intake agency eligible? Relatives?

A: Follow your own agency's conflict of interest policy as applicable. Anyone who meets the criteria specified in the program requirements (over 18, impacted by COVID crisis, under 80% Area Median Income, resident within city limits of Portland) is eligible.

Q: Are there any certification requirements to be designated a "community based organization"?

A: No, this term does not require certification, it just refers to communities that work closely with the targeted groups and have networks within those groups.

Q: Is there a way to track whether people are applying for multiple cards through multiple agencies?

A: Yes, we will have a contract with an administrating agency that will be reviewing the forms and preparing the data for the bank, and among its duties is verifying that there are no duplicates.

Q: Are intakes only reimbursable if the applicant actually meets the criteria?

A: Yes, only intakes that are submitted to the administrative agency can be counted in your reports.

Q: If agencies find that they can provide more or fewer of the intakes than they originally thought, is there an opportunity to adjust our contracts up or down?

A: Yes, we will be making contract adjustments during the month of November to assure that the program can be fully paid out.

Q: Will only electronic forms be provided?

A: No, agencies will be able to print out and use paper forms.

Q: What documentation do you require from applicants? Related:

What qualifies as proof of residency?

Are you requiring social security numbers?

What if people have an arrest/conviction record?

A: We are requiring a mailing address that is inside the Portland city limits and the intake agency must verify that. We are not requiring other proofs of residency. We are not requiring SSN and we are not excluding people based on criminal history. We do need complete mailing address and full birthdate to process the bank cards. The other eligibility requirements are self-certified by the applicant.

Q: What are the reporting and intake submission deadlines at the end of the program given the December 30 CARES Act deadline?

A: We are still making these decisions. The deadlines will be clearly spelled out in the intake contracts.

Q: For homeless people, how can they have access?

A: There is additional money set aside for local agencies that serve the homeless to provide these cards directly to their clientele.

Q: How are intake agencies supposed to provide help to non-English speakers?

A: There will be translated versions of the forms. We will be contracting with a variety of intake agencies, some of which will be community-based organizations that work directly with non-English-speaking constituencies. The application forms will be available in Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Russian, and Vietnamese. PHB is currently coordinating with our Equity Manager and Office of Equity and Human Rights about potential additional languages.

Q: Are there programs for people who live outside the Portland city limits?

A: 211Info can help you look for programs in your own locality. You can also contact your own local government directly. As the State, the counties and the local jurisdictions all have their own CARES Act allocations, they are all going to be offering separate programs that may be designed differently than Portland's.